

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

These remarks are responsive to the Final Office Action dated January 8, 2008. Claims 26-33 and 38-40 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-3, 21-33, and 38-40 are rejected. No claims have been changed, and claims 1-3 and 21-25 have been cancelled by this amendment.

Applicant has cancelled claims 1-3 and 21-25 from further consideration in this application. Applicant is not conceding in this application that the cancelled claims are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the remaining subject matter. Applicant respectfully reserves the right to pursue the original and other claims in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

Foreign Priority

The Examiner stated that a certified English translation of the foreign priority application must be filed to obtain the benefit of foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d). Accordingly, Applicant has filed a certified English translation and a statement that the translation of the certified copy is accurate, a copy of which is attached hereto. Applicant therefore claims the benefit of foreign priority as provided by the priority document.

103 Rejections

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 21-33, and 38-40 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being unpatentable over Chang et al. (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2004/0119740) (“Chang”) in view of Smith (US Patent No. 6792448).

Applicant has perfected the priority filing date of the present application by filing a certified translation of the priority document with the USPTO on June 10, 2008. The effective filing date of the present application therefore predates the filing date of the Chang application (i.e., present application effective filing date October 23, 2002 versus the Chang filing date of December 24, 2002). Thus, Chang is not a valid prior art reference. As a result, Applicant respectfully submits that the claim rejections should be withdrawn by the Examiner.

Smith generally discloses a threaded text discussion or chat system. A threaded discussion message pane 72 renders messages in a threaded or tree structure (4:57-58). However, Smith fails to disclose each every element recited in claim 26. For example, Smith fails to disclose generating a virtual document from the group of documents as in claim 26. Instead, Smith merely displays chat messages in a thread. As a result, Smith has no need for, and also fails to disclose, selecting the relationship for a group of documents, or forming a section group that includes the group of documents.

Claim 26 is therefore patentable over Smith. Claims 27-33 are dependent from claim 26 and are patentable over Chang in view of Smith for at least the same reasons as claim 26, and for additional reasons.

Claim 38 is also patentable over Smith. For example, Smith does not disclose mapping a plurality of documents into a virtual document. Claims 39-40 are dependent from claim 38 and patentable over Smith for at least the same reasons as claim 38, and for additional reasons.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 26-33 and 38-40 are patentable, and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of the claims as now presented.

Applicants' attorney believes this application in condition for allowance. Should any unresolved issues remain, Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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日 本 国 特 許 庁
JAPAN PATENT OFFICE

別紙添付の書類に記載されている事項は下記の出願書類に記載されている事項と同一であることを証明する。

This is to certify that the annexed is a true copy of the following application as filed with this Office.

出 願 年 月 日
Date of Application: 2002年10月23日

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Application Number: 特願2002-308821

パリ条約による外国への出願
に用いる優先権の主張の基礎
となる出願の国コードと出願
番号

the country code and number
of your priority application,
be used for filing abroad
under the Paris Convention, is

J P 2002-308821

願 人
Applicant(s):

インターナショナル・ビジネス・マシーンズ・コーポレーシ
ョン

2008年 5月26日

特許庁長官
Commissioner,
Japan Patent Office

肥塚 雅博

